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Background and history

Many African flags have similar colors or the same colors because of the historical context and the influence of Pan-Africanism. During the era of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s, African leaders envisioned a united Africa and saw themselves as part of a larger African entity. They believed that unity was crucial for Africa to regain its lost glory and overcome the legacy of imperialism and colonization. The Pan-African Organization played a significant role in promoting unity among black people, both within Africa and in the diaspora. Pan-African conferences were held in various cities around the world, and leaders emerged from these movements. Marcus Garvey, a black rights activist in America, championed the idea of a separate nation in Africa for black Americans. He designed a flag with the colors red, black, and green, representing bloodshed, the continent, and its people, respectively. The flag of Ethiopia played a significant role in influencing African flags. Ethiopia was never colonized and successfully resisted Italian colonization attempts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its flag, consisting of red, yellow, and green, became a symbol of African resistance and defiance against European powers. The colors of the Ethiopian flag, along with the Pan-African colors, were adopted by many independent African countries as they gained their freedom. READ ALL OUR CORONAVIRUS COVERAGE A casual glance at the flags of Africa, makes it seem as if dozens of her countries hired a single, lazy designer who, instead of coming up with a bespoke flag for each nation, simply arranged the same few colours in slightly different shapes and configurations. Guinea: vertical stripes in red, gold and green. Mali: vertical stripes in green, gold and red. The flag of Mali, just like the flag of Chad, like Senegal, but the stripes are horizontal. Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Bissau sports a black star like Ghana. And on it goes. The red, gold and green motif repeats, itself on the national flag of at least 23 African countries. But this is no coincidence – nor a lazy designer. Instead, the flags represent an intentional show of support and solidarity from men, in the 1960s, dizzying waves of nationalism swept across the continent and countries yanked their freedom from colonial Europe. Red. Yellow. Green. The colours – both a reminder for countries whose independence was slow to come that they were not alone, and a warning to the colonisers that their oppressive systems would be conquered in their entirety – were borrowed from Ethiopia's 123-year-old banner. The Ethiopian Negus Haile Selassie I taking part in an official ceremony. Addis Ababa, 1966. (Photo by Mondadori via Getty Images) Imperial Ethiopia, whose armies made short work of encroaching Italian troops, was one of only two African nations, along with Liberia, never colonised (save for a short Italian occupation). Nationalist leaders saw the country as a beacon of hope. The Ethiopian cross tricolour flag was originally inspired by the rainbow, according to historian Whitney Smith, and dates back to pennants (tapered flags used for identification or signalling) flown in the 17th century at the time of the Aussa Sultanate – a kingdom that existed in eastern Ethiopia. Historians are not sure exactly what the colours mean, but some say they represent Christianity's Holy Trinity – a nod to the line of emperors claiming to be descendants of Solomon, the last of which was Emperor Haile Selassie. The same colours would be appropriated by Rastafarianism, the religion which accordns divine status to Emperor Selassie. Ghana was the first country to pick up on Ethiopia's color scheme.

Kwame Nkrumah, the country's first president and liberation leader, is often given credit for the design. But it was, in fact, a 35-year-old artist and sports-woman named Theodosiah Okoh who came up with it, after answering a national call for new flag ideas. The royal standard is lowered, and the flag of Ghana raised, as the Duchess of Kent leaves the assembly building after reading the Queen's speech to Parliament, making Ghana independent. As from midnight, Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, became fully independent within the Commonwealth. Ghana's new leadership wanted something visually appropriate to replace the flag of the Gold Coast colony: a blue ensign featuring an elephant, a palm tree and a too-red sunset below Britain's Union Jack. Harcourt Fuller, a history professor at Georgia State University notes that "the position of the Gold Coast below the Union Jack may have reflected its lower status as a colony of superior imperial power". Okoh's design represented a comprehensive rejection of the old flag. Red was for the blood spilt in the struggle for independence. Yellow for the vast reserves of gold and minerals in Ghana – and reminiscent of the lustrous banners of the ancient Ashanti Empire, that featured a golden stool set in black. Green for the land; for the bounties of its harvest. On the yellow middle stripe, where Ethiopia's Lion of Judah symbol then sat – replaced by a blue disk and gold star on Ethiopia's modern flag – Okoh placed a black star. "I added the black star for the colour of the black people," Okoh said in a 2013 interview. As African colonies liberated themselves, one after the other, they were inspired by independent Ghana's new flag. First Guinea, then Cameroon, Senegal, Togo and the former Republic of Rwanda took the colours. Mali, the Republic of Congo and the Republic of Dahomey (now Benin) followed. The colours became synonymous with the wave of pan-Africanism that was sweeping the continent – a connection so powerful that the colours are even featured on more recent flags, such as that of post-apartheid South Africa. This symbolism has its roots in Okoh's design. Unfortunately, there is little documentation of her flag design process. It is perhaps why her contributions appear to have been underplayed and subtly erased over the years. Also, Ghana's flag has another popular origin story. In the 1930s, when Nkrumah was studying in the United States, he met and was greatly influenced by Marcus Garvey – one of the intellectual architects of pan-African thought. Garvey believed strongly that African-Americans should be "free citizens of Africa, the Motherland of all Negroes". The influences of men such as Garvey fuelled Nkrumah's struggle against imperial forces and his vision for a united African government. Garvey convened the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 and took for its banners the colours red, black and green – another iteration of Ethiopia's flag. In 1919, he founded the Black Star Line, a shipping venture that would transport African-Americans to Africa and fulfil his dream of a connected black nation. The Black Star Line's emblem was a red banner with a five-pointed black star at its centre. "The flag of Ghana was announced to the world on 10 October 1956, and was, as we all know it today, resplendent in its Ethiopian colours emblazoned in the Black Star which Nkrumah had borrowed from Garvey," wrote William Crampton, a prominent British vexillologist. But Nkrumah could not have borrowed the black star, because Nkrumah did not design the flag. The detail in Okoh's design may have prompted Nkrumah's approval, but that's about it. Flag designers are often left unrecognized. Nigeria's flag designer Taiwo Akinkunmi was compensated at independence but lived in poverty for years until Sunday Olawale Olaniran, a researcher, found him and brought his plight to the limelight. Okoh was never even informed that her design had been selected – she found out when she saw images of her flag being hoisted during Ghana's independence day ceremonies. There were no approval letters, no official emissaries, no attribution, nothing. Okoh's iconic design remains Ghana's symbol today. There have been two interruptions: a brief period in 1958 when Guinea and Mali temporarily merged with Ghana to form the Union of African States; and in 1964 when Nkrumah, in his authoritarian phase, replaced the yellow stripe in the middle of the flag with a white stripe, to better match the ruling party colours. (Photo by Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images) Okoh died in 2015. On her death, her government acknowledged her contribution: "The instant recognition that our nation receives the world over through the unique flag that she designed for us has cemented her place in history as a colossus of Ghanaian history," said the minister of communications. At her funeral, Okoh's coffin was wrapped in the very emblem she created 58 years before. "She was a huge inspiration to me as an artist," writes Ian Jones-Quartey, a Cartoon Network producer and Okoh's grandson. "Her presence in our family made the path of art viable and even honourable. I don't think I could be the work I do now without her." Jones Quartey, producer of the popular animated series Steven Universe, based the character Nanaflux Pizzi, the sweetest-looking dog-fighting matador of a Ghanaian family business, on his grandmother, even in death the Black Star lives on. It is raised every time the Black Stars – the national football team – take to the pitch; and every time Ghana's national anthem is sung. The third stanza reads: Raise high the flag of GhanaAnd one with Africa advanceBlack Star of hope and honour!To all who thirst for libertyWhere the banner of Ghana freely fliesMay the way to freedom truly lie. These words may have been written for Ghana, but they apply equally to the other 20-plus African countries whose flags are inspired by Okoh's design. Red, green and gold is not just a pretty colour scheme. It is solidarity. This article was first published in The Continent, the new pan-African weekly newspaper designed to be read and shared on WhatsApp. Download your free copy here. Correction: A photograph originally published with this article purporting to show Theodosia Okoh in fact showed her sister, Dr Letitia Eva Obeng. We apologise for this error. Thank you to Jonas Nyabour from Dubawa for bringing it to our attention. The African flag is red, yellow, and green because these colors hold symbolic meanings for the people and nations of Africa. Here are the answers to some commonly asked questions about the colors of the African flag: What do the colors of the African flag mean? The colors of the African flag hold important meanings. Red represents the blood that unites all people of Black African ancestry and the sacrifices made for liberation. Yellow symbolizes the wealth and treasures of the African continent. Green represents the abundant and vibrant natural resources found in Africa, often referred to as the Motherland. Why do African countries have red, yellow, and green flags? The use of red, yellow, and green in African flags is often influenced by the pan-Africanist movement. These colors have come to represent African unity, liberation, and pride. They symbolize the shared history, struggles, and aspirations of African nations. What does the green, yellow, and red flag symbolize? The green, yellow, and red flag symbolizes different aspects of African identity and heritage. Green symbolizes hope, growth, and the natural wealth of Africa. Yellow represents the prosperity, energy, and warmth found on the continent. Red symbolizes the bravery, courage, and the blood shed by African ancestors during the fight for liberation. What does the red, yellow, and green flag represent? The red, yellow, and green flag represents the rich history, culture, and unity of African nations. Red represents the struggle and sacrifices made for independence and freedom. Yellow symbolizes the continent's abundant resources and economic potential. Green represents the hope for a brighter future and the natural beauty of Africa. Why are African flags mostly red, yellow, and green? African flags often feature red, yellow, and green as a representation of the pan-Africanist movement. These colors were inspired by the Ethiopian flag, which was the only African country to resist colonization. Red, yellow, and green have since become symbols of African unity and independence. What is the significance of red, yellow, and green in African culture? Red, yellow, and green hold significant cultural and symbolic meanings in African culture. Red represents strength, courage, and the sacrifices made by African ancestors. Yellow symbolizes wealth, prosperity, and abundance. Green represents nature, fertility, and growth. What do the colors of the Ethiopian flag symbolize? The colors of the Ethiopian flag, which are red, yellow, and green, hold important symbolic meanings. Red symbolizes the power and sacrifice of Ethiopian martyrs. Yellow represents the wealth and prosperity of the country. Green symbolizes the fertility and natural beauty of Ethiopia. What do the colors red, yellow, and green represent in Africa? In Africa, the colors red, yellow, and green hold different meanings depending on the context. Red often represents courage, strength, and the bloodshed during the fight for independence. Yellow symbolizes the wealth, prosperity, and the bright future of Africa. Green represents hope, growth, and the natural resources found on the continent. What do the colors red, yellow, and green mean in African flag symbolism? The symbolism of red, yellow, and green in African flags varies across nations, but they often represent similar concepts. Red symbolizes the struggle for independence and the bloodshed of African ancestors. Yellow represents the wealth and prosperity of the continent. Green symbolizes the hope for a prosperous and sustainable future. You see, the concept of Pan-Africanism is a worldwide movement that aims at encouraging and strengthening the bonds of solidarity between all indigenous and diaspora ethnic groups of Africa.Nkrumah was strongly inspired by Ethiopia's resistance against foreign occupation and decided to incorporate the country's tri-color scheme into the Ghana flag – as a way of paying homage to Ethiopia for being the only African country – aside from Liberia, that was never colonized.They took Ethiopia's flag – which by this time had the green stripe on top instead of red, flipped it, and placed a black 5 point star in the center of the flag.Soon other newly independent African countries would follow suit.Guinea, upon gaining independence in 1958, took the same idea but this time they went for a vertical tri-color scheme instead.Mali's flag is Guinea's flag but with green at the beginning and red at the last strip.The flag of Cameroon, similar to Mali, has red at the middle band with a yellow star and a yellow stripe at the end of the flag.The flag of Senegal is very similar to that of Mali but with a green star in the middle.Other African countries that had these colors in their flags include Togo, Comoros, Burkina Faso, Seychelles, Guinea-Bissau, Sao tome and Principe, Congo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Mauritania, Benin, and so many others.These three colors red, green, and yellow with the inclusion of black will later be known as the Pan-African colors.Although the meaning of the individual colors used in a country's flag may differ from country to country; the countries of the flags that make use of the Pan-African colors have similar meaning with green representing the unique nature of the continent having good land for agriculture, red representing the blood, and common heritage of Africans during the fight against oppression from colonialism, yellow representing the wealth of Africa, and finally, black which signifies the color of the people.However, there is another variation of the Pan-African color scheme, developed by Marcus Mosiah Garvey – the Jamaican-born founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) that makes use of red, yellow, and green. These colors have transcended mere aesthetics to become powerful symbols of identity, unity, and aspiration. From ancient cave paintings to modern-day flags, red, yellow, and green continue to inspire and captivate, reminding us of the rich and enduring legacy of African cultures. Growing up, I loathed red. When people associated these colors with Jamaica, hippies, or even marijuana, yet were not able to locate Ethiopia on a map. How could I blame others for not knowing, as Pan Africanism isn't a topic you'd expect people tend to talk about at lunch time (unless you're like me). These colours in fact represent Pan African ideologies. Pan Africanism is a cultural/political movement calling for African unity. The tri-color scheme stems from the colours of the Ethiopian empire, dating back to the Solomonic dynasty in the early 19th century. Video: Brief HISTORY of the Imperial ETHIOPIAN Flag and Faro ENGRAVING Rebuhe! (part 1) Ever wondered why so many national flags include the colours green/yellow/red? During the Scramble for Africa, Ethiopia was the only African country other than Liberia that retained its sovereignty as a recognized independent country. After having gained independence from colonial rule, newly established African countries adopted the colours of Ethiopia's flag, as a sign of solidarity towards its resistance against colonial occupation. Addis Ababa became headquarters of several international organisations, being one of only four African members of the League of Nations, and a founding member of the UN. Ghana was the first African country to adopt the Ethiopian colours, only inverting the order to avoid confusion. President Kwame Nkrumah also added a black star to the central stripe of the flag, symbolising the UNIA's Black Star Line. (Scroll down for more on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA). Several Caribbean countries that gained independence during the 1960s and 70s also adopted the Pan-African colours in their national flags. The emblems on the Ethiopian flag have changed over time. During the Solomonic Empire it carried the Lion of Judah across its midsection. The crowned lion carrying a cross illustrates the link between the Ethiopian church, the peoples, and its unity. The Derg regime (1975-87) used the plain tri-colour. The People's Democratic Republic government (1987-91) later added its coat of arms on the flag. The current flag consists of a yellow pentagram radiating rays of light on a blue circle. The green represents fertility of land, yellow represents the harmony between ethnic and religious groups, and red represents the lives sacrificed and blood spilled in the defence of national honour. The colours Red, Black and Green are also often associated with the Pan African colours, due to individuals such as Marcus Garvey. Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican spokesman for Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism movement in America. His Pan-African philosophy inspired a mass movement known as Garveyism. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) aiming to unite the African diaspora to "establish a country and absolute government of their own." His work is what later inspired others such as Malcolm X, and the Rastafari movement. When creating the "African American" flag, it is said that Marcus Garvey thought he was using the Ethiopian colours, and later became aware of his mistake at the time of Haile Selassie's coronation. However, by that time the red/black/green flag was already an established and recognized flag, and so it was not changed. As a result, the red/black/green colour scheme was adopted by African countries such as Kenya and Malawi. H. Vinton Plummer, director of the UNIA's Bureau of Publicity and Propaganda, stated: "The Red is emblematical of the richness of the blood; the Black symbolizes the millions of Negroes scattered throughout the globe; the Green is designed to keep before the mind's eye Africa's verdant fields". Thus, this flag intended to serve as a symbol for people of black African descent worldwide. The Rastafari colours of red, gold, green, and are very commonly displayed on the Rastafarian flag. Although the Ethiopian tri-colors are Green, Yellow Red. It has been said "Red is said to signify the blood of martyrs, green the vegetation and beauty of Ethiopia, and gold the wealth of Africa." In Ethiopia the Tri-Colors represents the Three sons of Noah. Rastafan is an Abrahamic belief, it's name embodying that of the Ethiopian Emperor, Ras (his majesty) Tefari Makonnen (Haile Selassie's name before his coronation). Rastafarianism developed in the slums of Jamaica, following the coronation of Haile Selassie I as Emperor in 1930. The belief is based on Judaism and Christianity, placing emphasis on the "one star of African freedom", signifying the spirit of independence and self-determination. 7. What is the significance of black in African flags? Black often represents the African people themselves, as well as their history, resilience, and cultural heritage. It can also symbolize spiritual energy and mourning. 8. What does white represent in African flags? White often symbolizes peace, unity, and purity. It can also represent spirituality in some contexts. 9. What does blue represent in African culture? Blue has varied meanings, including love, protection, and spirituality. It is also associated with royalty in some African traditions. 10. What is the Pan-African flag? The Pan-African flag, also known as the Afro-American or Black Liberation flag, is a horizontal tricolor of red, black, and green, created in 1920. It symbolizes the unity and pride of people of African descent worldwide. 11. What is the flag of Niger? Niger's flag features a horizontal triband of orange, white, and green, with an orange circle in the center. It was adopted in 1959 and has remained the same since Niger's independence in 1960. 12. What is the flag of Cameroon? The flag of Cameroon is a vertical tricolor of green, red, and yellow, with a yellow five-pointed star in the center of the red stripe. 13. What is the flag of Rwanda? Rwanda's flag is a horizontal tricolor of light blue (double height), yellow, and green with a yellow sunshine with sunbeams on the upper-right hand side. Light blue represents happiness and peace. 14. Why are African clothing and fabrics so colorful? Bright colors in African clothing often serve ritualistic and traditional purposes. These colors carry specific cultural meanings, like the red, white, blue, and black of the Yoruba peoples, representing the four rivers of the Earth. 15. Do all African flags follow the Pan-African color scheme? No, not all African flags use red, yellow, and green. Many flags incorporate other colors and symbols to reflect their specific history, culture, and national identity. However, the influence of the Pan-African colors remains undeniable, reflecting a shared vision of unity and liberation across the continent. In conclusion, the prevalence of red, yellow, and green in African flags is a testament to the enduring influence of the Pan-African movement and Ethiopia's legacy. These colors represent a shared history of struggle, hope, and the pursuit of unity, making them a powerful symbol of African identity and aspiration. Ever wondered why so many African countries have Red, Green and yellow on their flags? We are here to find out. Lets have a look. Colors of Africa These colors are deeply rooted in African history and are often referred to as Pan-African colors. They symbolize the struggles for independence, rich cultural heritage and unity among African Nations. The Red on most flags is a powerful color representing the bloodshed by martyrs and freedom fighter during the struggles for independence across the continent. It is a reminder of the sacrifices made for sovereignty and freedom. Green symbolize the lush landscape of Africa, the abundant natural wealth of the continent from its dense forests to its fertile lands, natural wealth and hope for the future, well we hope for a better future, and from the other hand often stands for the continents wealth in mineral and natural resources, it also symbolizes the sun and the desert landscapes.The adoption of these colors was significantly influenced by Ethiopia, one of the oldest nations in the world and the only African country that was never colonized following its victory over Italy at the battle of Adwa.

Symbolism

Red often represents courage, strength, and the bloodshed during the fight for independence. Yellow symbolizes the wealth, prosperity, and the bright future of Africa. Green represents hope, growth, and the natural resources found on the continent. What do the colors red, yellow, and green mean in African flag symbolism? The symbolism of red, yellow, and green in African flags varies across nations, but they often represent similar concepts. Red symbolizes the struggle for independence and the bloodshed of African ancestors. Yellow represents the wealth and prosperity of the continent. Green symbolizes the hope for a prosperous and sustainable future. 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These colors have transcended mere aesthetics to become powerful symbols deeply embedded in the African consciousness. But why are red, yellow, and green so intrinsically linked to the African continent? This exploration delves into the historical, cultural, and symbolic significance of these colors, uncovering the stories they tell and the meanings they hold for people across the vast and diverse African landscape. The Historical Context: A Legacy of Color The use of red, yellow, and green in Africa predates recorded history. These colors are found in ancient cave paintings, rock art, and archaeological artifacts, indicating their deep-rooted presence in the continent's artistic and cultural expression. The availability of natural pigments derived from plants, minerals, and insects likely played a role in their early adoption. Red ochre, a natural clay pigment, was widely used for body painting, rituals, and artistic creations, symbolizing life, fertility, and the earth's bounty. Yellow ochre, derived from iron oxide, represented the sun, gold, and prosperity. Green pigments, often extracted from plants like malvaite or verdigris, symbolized growth, nature, and harmony. Ancient Egyptians, renowned for their sophisticated civilization, played a significant role in shaping the symbolic meanings of these colors. Red, associated with the god Horus, represented power, royalty, and protection. Yellow, linked to the sun god Ra, symbolized light, knowledge, and divine power. Green, connected to the goddess Isis, represented fertility, rebirth, and the life-giving Nile River. These associations permeated Egyptian art, architecture, and religious practices, influencing the color symbolism in neighboring cultures. African Kingdoms and Empires Across the continent, various African kingdoms and empires adopted and adapted these color meanings. The Ashanti Empire in Ghana, for example, revered gold as a symbol of wealth and power, incorporating it prominently into their art, jewelry, and regalia. The Yoruba people of Nigeria associated red with the warrior god Ogun, representing strength, courage, and protection. The Zulu people of South Africa used red ochre in their traditional ceremonies and rituals, signifying blood, sacrifice, and the connection to ancestral spirits. The Cultural Significance: A Tapestry of Meanings Beyond their historical roots, red, yellow, and green have become deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of Africa. They are used in a wide range of contexts, each carrying its own unique set of meanings and interpretations. Art and Music African art and music are vibrant expressions of culture, often incorporating these colors in bold and striking ways. From the intricate patterns of Kente cloth in Ghana to the vibrant masks of the Yoruba people, red, yellow, and green evoke a sense of energy, rhythm, and spiritual connection. In music, these colors are often associated with specific instruments, rhythms, and genres, adding another layer of meaning to their cultural significance. (See Also: What Are the Colors of a Giraffe? Amazing Facts Revealed) Clothing and Adornment African clothing and adornment are renowned for their beauty and cultural significance. Traditional garments often feature intricate patterns and designs incorporating red, yellow, and green. These colors can signify social status, tribal affiliation, or personal beliefs. For example, in some cultures, red may be worn to signify courage or royalty, while yellow may represent wisdom or prosperity. Green, often associated with fertility, is frequently used in wedding attire and ceremonial clothing. Ceremonies and Rituals Red, yellow, and green play a vital role in many African ceremonies and rituals. In some cultures, these colors are used to symbolize the connection between the physical and spiritual realms. They may be incorporated into offerings to ancestors, used in healing rituals, or worn during important life events such as births, marriages, and funerals. The specific meanings and uses of these colors vary widely depending on the cultural context and traditions. The Pan-African Symbolism: A Unifying Force In the 20th century, red, yellow, and green gained a new level of significance as pan-African symbols. These colors were adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU), as a representation of the unity and solidarity of the African continent. The colors have since become widely recognized as a symbol of African pride, identity, and liberation. The Meaning of the Colors The specific meanings attributed to red, yellow, and green in the pan-African context are as follows: Red: Represents the blood shed by Africans in their struggle for freedom and independence. Yellow: Symbolizes the wealth of the continent's natural resources and the golden heritage of Africa. Green: Stands for the lush landscapes, fertile land, and the hope for a prosperous future. The adoption of these colors as a unifying symbol has played a crucial role in fostering a sense of shared identity and solidarity among Africans across the globe. (See Also: When Do Cats Eyes Change Colors? A Feline Mystery) The Enduring Legacy: Colors that Inspire Red, yellow, and green are more than just colors; they are powerful symbols that encapsulate the history, culture, and aspirations of the African people. From ancient times to the present day, these colors have been used to express a wide range of meanings, from the sacred to the secular, from the individual to the collective. Their enduring legacy continues to inspire artists, musicians, activists, and individuals around the world, reminding us of the rich tapestry of African heritage and the enduring power of color to communicate meaning and evoke emotion. Frequently Asked Questions Why are red, yellow, and green often used together? Red, yellow, and green often used together? Red, yellow, and green are used together because they represent the rich and diverse heritage of African cultures. Growing up, I loathed red. When people associated these colors with Jamaica, hippies, or even marijuana, yet were not able to locate Ethiopia on a map. How could I blame others for not knowing, as Pan Africanism isn't a topic you'd expect people tend to talk about at lunch time (unless you're like me). These colours in fact represent Pan African ideologies. Pan Africanism is a cultural/political movement calling for African unity. The tri-color scheme stems from the colours of the Ethiopian empire, dating back to the Solomonic dynasty in the early 19th century. Video: Brief HISTORY of the Imperial ETHIOPIAN Flag and Faro ENGRAVING Rebuhe! (part 1) Ever wondered why so many national flags include the colours green/yellow/red? During the Scramble for Africa, Ethiopia was the only African country other than Liberia that retained its sovereignty as a recognized independent country. After having gained independence from colonial rule, newly established African countries adopted the colours of Ethiopia's flag, as a sign of solidarity towards its resistance against colonial occupation. Addis Ababa became headquarters of several international organisations, being one of only four African members of the League of Nations, and a founding member of the UN. Ghana was the first African country to adopt the Ethiopian colours, only inverting the order to avoid confusion. President Kwame Nkrumah also added a black star to the central stripe of the flag, symbolising the UNIA's Black Star Line. (Scroll down for more on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA). Several Caribbean countries that gained independence during the 1960s and 70s also adopted the Pan-African colours in their national flags. The emblems on the Ethiopian flag have changed over time. During the Solomonic Empire it carried the Lion of Judah across its midsection. The crowned lion carrying a cross illustrates the link between the Ethiopian church, the peoples, and its unity. The Derg regime (1975-87) used the plain tri-colour. The People's Democratic Republic government (1987-91) later added its coat of arms on the flag. The current flag consists of a yellow pentagram radiating rays of light on a blue circle. The green represents fertility of land, yellow represents the harmony between ethnic and religious groups, and red represents the lives sacrificed and blood spilled in the defence of national honour. The colours Red, Black and Green are also often associated with the Pan African colours, due to individuals such as Marcus Garvey. Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican spokesman for Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism movement in America. His Pan-African philosophy inspired a mass movement known as Garveyism. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) aiming to unite the African diaspora to "establish a country and absolute government of their own." His work is what later inspired others such as Malcolm X, and the Rastafari movement. When creating the "African American" flag, it is said that Marcus Garvey thought he was using the Ethiopian colours, and later became aware of his mistake at the time of Haile Selassie's coronation. However, by that time the red/black/green flag was already an established and recognized flag, and so it was not changed. As a result, the red/black/green colour scheme was adopted by African countries such as Kenya and Malawi. H. Vinton Plummer, director of the UNIA's Bureau of Publicity and Propaganda, stated: "The Red is emblematical of the richness of the blood; the Black symbolizes the millions of Negroes scattered throughout the globe; the Green is designed to keep before the mind's eye Africa's verdant fields". Thus, this flag intended to serve as a symbol for people of black African descent worldwide. The Rastafari colours of red, gold, green, and are very commonly displayed on the Rastafarian flag. Although the Ethiopian tri-colors are Green, Yellow Red. It has been said "Red is said to signify the blood of martyrs, green the vegetation and beauty of Ethiopia, and gold the wealth of Africa." In Ethiopia the Tri-Colors represents the Three sons of Noah. Rastafan is an Abrahamic belief, it's name embodying that of the Ethiopian Emperor, Ras (his majesty) Tefari Makonnen (Haile Selassie's name before his coronation). Rastafarianism developed in the slums of Jamaica, following the coronation of Haile Selassie I as Emperor in 1930. The belief is based on Judaism and Christianity, placing emphasis on the "one star of African freedom", signifying the spirit of independence and self-determination. 7. What is the significance of black in African flags? Black often represents the African people themselves, as well as their history, resilience, and cultural heritage. It can also symbolize spiritual energy and mourning. 8. What does white represent in African flags? White often symbolizes peace, unity, and purity. It can also represent spirituality in some contexts. 9. What does blue represent in African culture? Blue has varied meanings, including love, protection, and spirituality. It is also associated with royalty in some African traditions. 10. What is the Pan-African flag? The Pan-African flag, also known as the Afro-American or Black Liberation flag, is a horizontal tricolor of red, black, and green, created in 1920. It symbolizes the unity and pride of people of African descent worldwide. 11. What is the flag of Niger? Niger's flag features a horizontal triband of orange, white, and green, with an orange circle in the center. It was adopted in 1959 and has remained the same since Niger's independence in 1960. 12. What is the flag of Cameroon? The flag of Cameroon is a vertical tricolor of green, red, and yellow, with a yellow five-pointed star in the center of the red stripe. 13. What is the flag of Rwanda? Rwanda's flag is a horizontal tricolor of light blue (double height), yellow, and green with a yellow sunshine with sunbeams on the upper-right hand side. Light blue represents happiness and peace. 14. Why are African clothing and fabrics so colorful? Bright colors in African clothing often serve ritualistic and traditional purposes. These colors carry specific cultural meanings, like the red, white, blue, and black of the Yoruba peoples, representing the four rivers of the Earth. 15. Do all African flags follow the Pan-African color scheme? No, not all African flags use red, yellow, and green. Many flags incorporate other colors and symbols to reflect their specific history, culture, and national identity. However, the influence of the Pan-African colors remains undeniable, reflecting a shared vision of unity and liberation across the continent. In conclusion, the prevalence of red, yellow, and green in African flags is a testament to the enduring influence of the Pan-African movement and Ethiopia's legacy. These colors represent a shared history of struggle, hope, and the pursuit of unity, making them a powerful symbol of African identity and aspiration. Ever wondered why so many African countries have Red, Green and yellow on their flags? We are here to find out. Lets have a look. Colors of Africa These colors are deeply rooted in African history and are often referred to as Pan-African colors. They symbolize the struggles for independence, rich cultural heritage and unity among African Nations. The Red on most flags is a powerful color representing the bloodshed by martyrs and freedom fighter during the struggles for independence across the continent. It is a reminder of the sacrifices made for sovereignty and freedom. Green symbolize the lush landscape of Africa, the abundant natural wealth of the continent from its dense forests to its fertile lands, natural wealth and hope for the future, well we hope for a better future, and from the other hand often stands for the continents wealth in mineral and natural resources, it also symbolizes the sun and the desert landscapes.The adoption of these colors was significantly influenced by Ethiopia, one of the oldest nations in the world and the only African country that was never colonized following its victory over Italy at the battle of Adwa.